

Tradescantia ohiensis. Feuilles planes, linéaires, aiguës, glabres; involucre multiflore plus long que les fleurs, divisions perigonales glabres. —Obs. Dans l'état de l'Ohio dans l'Amér. Sept. fleurs blanches.

There can be no doubt that *Tradescantia ohiensis* Raf. (1814) should displace *T. canaliculata* Raf. (1832).

The second species, *T. discolor* Raf. New Fl. ii. 87 (1837), was reduced without question to *T. virginiana* L. It is noteworthy, however, that *T. discolor* came from Florida and Alabama, whereas Anderson & Woodson recognized *T. virginiana* as following the mountains southward only into northwestern Georgia and eastern Tennessee, and to eastern Missouri. The plant of northwestern Florida and adjacent Alabama with the characters given by Rafinesque for his *T. discolor* (1837) is *T. hirsutiflora* Bush in Trans. Acad. Sci. St. Louis, xiv. 184 (1904), for which the monographers cite 11 numbers studied from Florida and Alabama. Anderson & Woodson describe the latter with "stems erect or ascending, straight . . . , 1.2–4.9 dm. [overlooking their misprint "cm.", which, corrected, equals 5 inches—1 foot, 7½ inches] long, . . . spreading-pilose, or hirsute" (Rafinesque said "Stem strait pilose . . . pedal and bipedal"); "leaves firmly membranaceous, deep green to somewhat subglaucous, . . . linear-lanceolate, . . . scatteringly pilose" (Rafinesque said "leaves lanceolate . . . glaucous and pilose beneath"); "cymes umbellate, . . . ; pedicels . . . pilose, . . . more or less reflexed . . . ; sepals . . . pubescent" (Rafinesque said "umbel terminal . . . , peduncles short nodding pilose like the calyx"). *T. discolor* Raf., however, is invalidated by *T. discolor* L'Héritier (1788). If it belongs in the synonymy of *T. virginiana* so does *T. hirsutiflora*. They may be only a southern extreme of a variable species.—M. L. FERNALD.

JUNCUS ACUTIFLORUS REDISCOVERED IN AMERICA.—In his *Monographie des vrais Joncées*, Mém. Soc. Hist. Nat. Paris. iii. 128 (1827), Laharpe, after stating the European range of *Juncus acutiflorus* Ehrh., said "M. de La Pylaie l'a rapportée dernièrement de Terre-Neuve". In RHODORA, xxviii. 51 and 87 (1926), Professor Fernald emphasized the failure of others to rediscover

in Newfoundland this very distinct plant of central, southern and southwestern Europe.

Two years ago I discovered on Langlade (Little Miquelon) a strange *Juncus* 3 or 4 feet high, growing in big masses in low open woodland back of the sea. The plant flowered but did not fruit, the summer having been rather cold. I could not find any clue to its identity either in Gray's Manual or in Britton and Brown's Illustrated Flora. I brought it to Harvard University where Professor Fernald was kind enough to identify it for me as the long-lost *J. acutiflorus*. This plant has been found in only one locality. It is now evident that Laharpe's record of LaPylaie's discovery was not an error.—M. LEHORS, St. Pierre et Miquelon.

IMAGINED WISDOM WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING.—While I was still a school-boy, my father, with both wisdom and understanding, employed me to copy longhand a baccalaureate address he was to deliver, with the time-honored text: "Wisdom is the principal thing: therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding". I at least got the idea and have subsequently endeavored to pass it on to such students as were susceptible to advice; but it is too often apparent that many people who aim to impart to others what they conceive as wisdom fail to realize the all-important need of understanding. At the moment I have before me one of the most complete assemblages of colloquial or so-called common names of American plants probably ever brought together.¹ This compendium is in the pages of the beautifully printed and seemingly authoritative *Dictionary of American English*².

Glancing through the first half of Volume I, "A—Corn patch" (the proper use of hyphens seems to be a stranger to the editors), one can hardly fail to be impressed by the large porportion of space given American names of plants and the fact that someone has done a great amount of compiling, mostly from books of travel or exploration or from fiction or essays, only rarely from accurate botanical writings. All this accumulation, if properly to serve the innocent public, should have been done with real understanding of the matter dealt with; but, apparently, the compilers have been content to compile, without the elementary realization that colloquial names and names loosely used, especially by the uninformed, are very "tricky": that their proper interpretation requires very intimate knowledge of plant-identities and local usages and a clear, instead of a completely muddled understanding. A few years ago Dr. George Neville Jones, reviewing a lexicographer's venture into plant-taxonomy, Criswell's *Lewis & Clark: Linguistic Pioneers*³, rightly said: "When the author ventures into the botanical field . . . he loses the trees in the forest . . . Many of his results and conclusions are nothing less than ludicrous", and he concluded with these words which are largely

¹ Of course excepting the authoritative (therefore not much quoted) collection of *Popular American Plant-Names* by FANNY D. BERGEN in the *Journal of American Folk-lore*, vols. v-ix (1892-1896).

² *A Dictionary of American English on Historical Principles*, compiled at the University of Chicago under the editorship of SIR WILLIAM A. CRAIGIE, co-editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and JAMES R. HULBERT, Professor of English, the University of Chicago. The University of Chicago Press. 1938 (Vol. I).

³ See RHODORA, xliii. 92-94 (1941).